

WA/OR/CA Sablefish Pot Fishery

Fishing gear type: Trap/Pot

Current category: Category II*

Basis for current classification on LOF: The mean annual mortality and serious injury of humpback whales (CA/OR/WA stock) is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level. The mean annual mortality and serious injury is 0.2 animals/year, or 8% of the stock's PBR (PBR=2.5).

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a ⁽¹⁾ indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification): Humpback whale, CA/OR/WA ⁽¹⁾.

Estimated number of current participants: 309

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: None.

Year added to the LOF: 1996

Category when originally listed: Category III

Basis for original classification on the LOF: This fishery was added to the LOF because of its known existence. However, there were no observer, logbook, or stranding data available at the time of its addition to the LOF.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 155

Past names, if any: None.

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery sets gear in waters past the 100 fathom curve off the West coast of the U.S. In CA, gear is set outside 150 fathoms, with an average depth of 190 fathoms. There are two separate trap fisheries, open access and limited entry, and both have quotas. Open access fishers will usually fish 1 to 8 strings of 3–4 pots, each with a float line and buoy stick. The gear sometimes soaks for long periods. Fishers in the limited entry fishery will normally fish 20–30 pot strings. As with most pot gear fished out in deeper waters, sablefish traps are set in strings of multiple traps.

Target species: Sablefish.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The fishery operates year round and effort varies from southern CA to the Canadian border. The limited entry fishery is open from April 1–October 31, while open access is available year-round.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: There has not been observer coverage in this fishery.

Management and regulations: This fishery is managed under regulations implementing the West Coast Groundfish FMP developed by Pacific Fishery Management Council. Access to the limited entry fishery is granted under a limited entry permit system, in addition to gear endorsements required by the individual states. Open access privileges are currently available to any fisherman with the requisite state gear endorsement, but catch quotas and area closures are more restrictive than the primary limited entry permit. Open access quotas vary based upon the area being fished. Limited entry permits are tiered based on the annual cumulative landings allowed by each permit.

* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

[†] Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Reports (SAR).

Permits are transferable, but the tier category remains fixed. Up to three limited entry permits may be stacked on a single vessel.

History of Changes on the LOF

2011 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 155 to 309.

2009 LOF:

- Elevated from Category III to Category II based on an entanglement of a humpback whale (CA/OR/WA) in 2006. This single humpback whale interaction equals a mean annual mortality and serious injury level of 0.2 animals/year, or 8% of the stock's PBR (PBR=2.5).
- Added humpback whale (CA/OR/WA) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured based on a serious injury in 2006 resulting in an annual mortality and serious injury level of 8% of PBR. A superscript "1" listed after this stock to indicate that takes of this stock are driving the classification of the fishery.
- Updated the estimated number of vessels/participants 176 to 155 (32 of which there are limited access permits).